

Ambulance Response

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Case #: N/A

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We are pleased to announce a change in the manner in which ambulances respond to non-emergency calls that will result in improved safety for residents of Eau Claire County.

Starting October 1, ambulances run by the Eau Claire Fire Department and Gold Cross Ambulance of Eau Claire will be permitted to respond to selected non-emergency calls without the use of emergency red lights and sirens. It has been determined that the risk of injury to ambulance occupants and other traffic is far higher when ambulances respond in emergency mode, using red lights and sirens, as opposed to when they run in non-emergency mode. Last year in Wisconsin there were 144 crashes involving emergency vehicles responding in emergency mode.

This change is in line with what has been done in many other communities across the nation to minimize the risk to ambulance occupants and the community at large. Ambulances will continue to respond in an emergency mode to all calls requiring that level of response in order to provide the most rapid assessment and treatment when that is likely to be of benefit to patients. This change affects only those selected cases in which any delay caused by responding in non-emergency mode will not have any negative impact. Less than 20 percent of all ambulance runs will be affected.

This is a change that will be implemented without any additional personnel, equipment, or other cost. There will be no realistic reduction in the quality of care provided by the ambulance services. The medical aspects of this type of non-emergency response have been reviewed and approved by the physician medical directors of both ambulance services and by the county emergency medical systems (EMS) medical director.

We request that this information be disseminated to the residents of Eau Claire County prior to the inauguration of this change, October 1, 2006. Thank you in advance for your help in this matter.

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